



SHARPE JAMES
MAYOR
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY
07102

FOCUS ON ARTS IN NEWARK

By Mayor Sharpe James

It won't be long before arts lovers from New Jersey, New York and the entire East Coast will be enjoying cultural events at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) to be located in Newark's waterfront district. With completion of the arts center's master plan and acceptance of that plan by the NJPAC's board, we expect completion of the center's first phase by 1994.

The master plan, as prepared by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and James Stewart Polshek & Partners, calls for construction of a multi-purpose hall, a concert hall, a pocket theater, parking garages and retail and office space in the area. The arts center and the commercial space along adjacent Center Street will create a corridor between Route 21, a state highway along Newark's waterfront, and Broad Street, the city's main downtown thoroughfare.

All of this located near Newark's Penn Station, where buses and trains to all parts of the state and region can bring arts patrons within walking distance of the arts center and local restaurants, shops and other businesses. And with Newark's excellent network of highways, those travelling by automobile also have easy access to the Performing Arts Center.

-MORE-

FOCUS ON ARTS IN NEWARK

2

Some people have told me that they felt money would be better spent on providing housing for the poor and homeless or for other projects rather than construction of a performing arts center. However well-meaning these people are, I tell them that they have to realize they are not seeing the whole picture. As a mayor, like all of us, I have to consider what is best for the entire city.

In Newark, we are in the midst of a renaissance that is proceeding very well. Public/private partnerships and volunteer efforts are putting a new face on Newark, creating improvements not only in how outsiders perceive Newark, but also in how residents perceive the city and themselves.

As Mayor, it is my responsibility to see that this renaissance continues long after my administration has come to an end. The New Jersey Performing Arts Center will keep Newark's renaissance booming well into the 21st Century. Countless surveys and reports have shown what arts centers can do for cities.

They turn the cities into destinations rather than areas people try to pass through as quickly as possible on their way to somewhere else. How many times have people sped through Newark on the New Jersey Turnpike on their way to New York or Philadelphia without giving a thought to Newark? Too many times!

-MORE-

FOCUS ON ARTS IN NEWARK

3

Now people will come to Newark to see the New Jersey Ballet or the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. While they are here, they will have to eat, they'll do some shopping and hopefully visit some of the city's other outstanding cultural institutions, like the recently renovated Newark Museum.

The arts center will provide a steady source of income, not only for the center itself but for all the businesses, restaurants and stores in Newark's downtown business district. It will thereby ensure that tax ratables stay in the city, providing the money to guarantee that the city can continue providing the services to which our residents are accustomed. This is a necessity in a city like Newark where 60 percent of our land is non-taxable because of the great number of government buildings and religious institutions.

Yes, the NJPAC will be good for Newark, as arts centers have been for cities across the nation. By building an arts center in Newark we are not sacrificing the needs of poor and homeless people. Rather we are ensuring the future of the entire city so we can guarantee the future of Newark for our residents.